

But she felt the inside of his leg that night 25 years ago after the football game and he might of gotten more but her sister came home. She might be working in a Nevada trailer ranch making more money than he ever would and he wouldn't know. The babies she's had, the cocks she's sucked. He doesn't know. He pours a scotch and turns on the T.V., the Raiders are playing the Rams. He feels her fingers walk up his leg.

TALKING CLANDESTINE BLUES

Rain bounces on the asphalt and the metal roof and windshield. She says my daughter's home, we can't go there. He says, I'm a little short on cash, we can't get a room. They sit quietly, looking straight ahead, listening to the rain. She says, I know of an empty parking lot. He says, this is a Chevette, not a van. She bites her lower lip. He rubs his hands on his pants. The rain drums on the roof. She says, let's get a hamburger and talk. He says, O.K. They walk across the parking lot to the burger place, his arm around her neck, her arm around his waist, large raindrops exploding on the blacktop all around them.

WORRIED BLUES

Phil's wearing his green top hat and black suspenders, drunk as he can be, and that usually means trouble. Some black guy's in the corner with a guitar, wailing unintelligibly, lost his big mamma or something. Judy's throwing dice in the hall with a couple of Arab types who're wearing a lot of gold jewelry and pinching her ass whenever the opportunity presents itself. The hired belly dancer takes off her bra and twirls

it over her head, shaking her breasts, and nobody notices.
Phil sticks his thumbs in his suspenders.
Judy rolls snake eyes and says, "shit."
The Arab guys laugh, one of them gooses her.
The black guy wails, his big mamma didn't come home last night and she's got his credit card and he's got the worried blues.

CLIFFORD AND BEVERLY DRIVE HOME FROM LAS VEGAS

"Look at all the fucking cactus," Cliff said as he rolled down his window to throw an empty beer can out.

"Joshua trees, dear, joshua trees," said Beverly, working the knitting needles on a sweater for their ninth grandchild, little Harvey, "and I wish you wouldn't use profanity."

"Joshua trees, joshua trees," Cliff said in a mocking falsetto, "what the fuck do you know?" Beverly smiled a tolerant smile, the same smile she smiled at her misbehaving grandchildren. She deftly disconnected one of the knitting needles from little Harvey's sweater and drove it a full six inches into Clifford's ear. The car swerved off the road, knocking over a joshua tree before Beverly could get her foot to the brake and stop it.

She got out of her side of the car and walked over to the driver's side, opened the door and pulled Cliff's lifeless, blubbery body out and into the sand. She got behind the wheel, feeling under the seat for the briefcase with the \$120,000 that she had won at the crap table while Clifford was passed out drunk.

She started the engine and pulled out onto the highway, lighting a cigarette, undoing her pinned-up hair, letting it fall around her shoulders. She put her foot to the floor, took a drag off the cigarette and said, to no one in particular, "Old Cliff shouldn't have fucked with Beverly today."

IN LINE AT THE POST OFFICE

Oh my God, look at the bazooms on her, he thought. He'd gotten out of his car and saw her walking across the parking lot in a tight, revealing t-shirt, big bombers